



# DCCECE COVID Commission Report

July 2020

**Website Information:** DCCECE has built a COVID 19 landing page on our website for quick and easy access for providers and parents seeking information. This landing page has hyperlinks provided for answers for essential employee eligibility, licensing requirements, cleaning guidance and many other resources. It also contains an interactive map that can be utilized to find open childcare facilities. In addition, direct links are provided to the Arkansas Department of Health website, and the CDC website so that providers can obtain further guidance and information on topics related to COVID.

- DCCECE Website: <https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/about-dhs/dccece>
- Open Facilities Interactive Map (scroll to the bottom of this web page to find the map):  
<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/resources/response-covid-19/response-covid-19-client>

**Child Care Provider Bi-Weekly Calls:** DCCECE is currently hosting bi-weekly Zoom calls with child care providers. These calls occur every other Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. The next call will be held on July 28, 2020.

- To join by phone: 301-715-8592 ID: 959 5436 3354
- To join by computer: [Click Here](#) ID: 959 5436 3354

**Child Care Licensing Unit:** Child Care Licensing has worked in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Health to put Pandemic Procedures in place for all licensing facilities. (A complete list of Pandemic Procedures can be found at the end of this report.)

- Limit the number of people coming into the facility
- Pickup and drop-off children outside of the facility, unless it is determined that there is a legitimate need for the parent to enter a facility.
- Limit congregation of children and class sizes to 10 or less including staff



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- Staff should wear cloth face masks to diminish potential spread from people who might be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic for COVID-19.
- Do not allow sick children to be cared for in the facility. If a child becomes sick while at the facility, contact the parent or guardian immediately and separate the child from other children at the facility.
- Ensure that each child is provided individual meals and snacks. Do not serve family style meals.
- Screening criteria must be in place, including screening at pick up for facilities that transport

**Child Care Development Block Grant Fund/Family Support Unit:** Family Support has worked in partnership with the Federal Child Care Development Fund Regional Office to implement the following resources.

- **Absentee Waivers-** To support families during COVID-19, DCCECE allowed all CCDF Program Participants, who are open, to bill above the absentee days allowed per the CCDF Participant Agreement. Once the maximum number of absentee days has been billed for March (6 allowed) and April (6 allowed), providers were required to complete an absentee waiver form and were instructed to complete the form in its entirety, and submitted via email to [CCDFProgramParticipant@dhs.arkansas.gov](mailto:CCDFProgramParticipant@dhs.arkansas.gov). In efforts to keep in alignment with the AR Department of Education's schedule for public schools, CCDF Program Participants, who have or will remain open beginning March where allowed to submit the Absentee Waiver form. The Division has keyed over 1000 absentee days for CCDF providers since the implementation.
- **Supplemental Payments to Providers-** The CARES Act provided funding opportunities for providers with continued payments and assistance to child care providers in the case of decreased enrollment or closures, and to assure the providers can remain open or to reopen. Providers could use funding for cleaning and sanitation, and other activities necessary to maintain or resume the operation of programs due to COVID-19. Supplemental payments were available to all licensed child care providers regardless of quality levels, even if such providers were not previously receiving CCDF assistance. The Division created a COVID-19 cost center to extract funds. The Division has allocated over 8.3 million to providers.
- **COVID-19 Voucher Payment Increase-** Effective March 27, 2020, DCCECE provided additional funds through the Child Care Development Block Grant for child care facilities that remain open and provide care for CCDF voucher children. Financial increases to current vouchers include: \$10 per infant/toddler, \$7.00 per preschool age child, and \$5.00 per school age/after school child. Lump sum payments begin in April and will be



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dispersed through the claims process. Providers are required to provide attendance records upon request. School age children who are authorized during this period were changed to full time vouchers at the request of the parent.

- **Essential Worker Application-** On March 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was enacted. The CARES Act allows various flexibilities for Arkansas to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. An estimated \$18 million was used to cover the cost of childcare for some essential workers in Arkansas. The Division established an Essential Worker application process to provide child care assistance to health care employees, emergency responders, sanitation workers, public health personnel, manufacturing workers, child care and early childhood staff, individuals involved in the food supply chain, and other workers deemed essential during the response to the coronavirus, without regard to the income eligibility requirements. Applicants are only required to complete a 1-page application with supporting documentation for short-term child care assistance. As of July 14, 2020, the Division has received over 1900 essential workers applications.
- **Deep Cleaning Sanitation Payment-** The Division offers CARES Act funding to providers who have positive COVID-19 cases in their facilities and required to close. This funding is used for deep cleaning. Providers are required to submit invoice receipts and the Division will reimburse for services. Positive cases are confirmed through the Arkansas Department of Health and our Child Care Licensing Unit before submitting the claim. Claims should be sent to: [DeepCleaning@dhs.arkansas.gov](mailto:DeepCleaning@dhs.arkansas.gov)

**Health and Nutrition Unit:** Through this unit over 27 million meals were provided to children this past fiscal year and over 7 million meals served since the beginning of the Pandemic.

- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has provided several national waivers during the COVID 19 pandemic. Most of the waivers have different start dates and end dates.  
See a list of the waivers below:
  - The **Unanticipated School Closure Waiver** allowed for the Summer Food Service Programs (SFSP) to begin the end of March, instead of late May. The waiver also allowed Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP) At Risk to continue even though the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was in operation.
  - The **Non-Congregate Feeding Waiver** allowed children to receive grab and go meals. Organizations had to follow the Arkansas Health Department COVID-19 regulations for distributing meals.



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- The **National Meal Pattern Waiver** allowed providers (with approval from DCCECE) to deviate from the required meal pattern if components were not available. The State Commodities Unit researched vendors in the areas of the state with shortages. In almost all situations, the unit was able to find alternative vendors to provide the needed meal components.
- The **Parent/Guardian Pick Up Waiver** allowed parents/guardians to pick up meals for children, without the children being present in order to protect the children from exposure.
- The **Educational/Enrichment Activities for Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP) At-Risk Waiver** removed the requirement that providers provide an educational or enrichment activity after school.
- The **Mealtime Service Waiver** allowed for multiple meals to be given to the children or parents at one time. Information on the household had to be gathered, ability to refrigeration, store and reheat meals if necessary. Also, instruction on which item went with each meal to ensure eligible meal patterns. Organizations had to follow the Arkansas Health Department COVID 19 regulation for distributing meals.
- The **Home Delivery of Meals Waiver** allowed schools and child care centers to deliver meals directly to the homes of children. The waiver required that the child be enrolled. The parent had to provide a permission slip in writing, giving the organization the authority to deliver meals to the home address. The organization had to provide a plan to keep address information confidential. The organization also had to adhere to the Arkansas Health Department COVID 19 guidelines for delivering meals.
- The **Reviews and Site Visit Waiver** provides some flexibilities on review schedules, time frames and types of reviews for both sponsors and the state agency. This waiver also allows for desk audits in certain situations.
- The **Area Eligibility Waiver** provided for areas in the state that were not usually eligible due to less than 50% of the children in the school district on free or reduce lunches to become eligible, if there was unusually higher unemployment for that area. The waiver has been challenging because unemployment data is required per neighborhood.



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## Commodities Unit:

- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) Food Distribution Comparison:

### **March-June 2019**

<b>Award</b>	<b># of Cases</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Pounds</b>
TEFAP	123,430	\$1,786,093.43	2,804,875.6
Trade Mitigation	114,085	\$4,123,501.75	3,906,124.0
Total	237,515	\$5,909,595.18	6,710,999.6

### **March-June 2020**

<b>Award</b>	<b># of Cases</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Pounds</b>
TEFAP	137,570	\$1,925,176.20	1,928,167
Trade Mitigation	146,708	\$5,478,692.16	4,209,047.2
FFCRA	4,276	\$218,472.73	118,344
Total	288,554	\$7,622,341.09	6,255,558.2

- Average number of clients served per month (based on entire year):
  - 2019: 147,000
  - 2020: 179,642
  - Approximately 22% increase
  - Note: The majority of incoming food orders from the CARES Act and the Family First Coronavirus Response Act will begin to arrive starting in July 2020.



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## **Pandemic Procedures for Child Care:**

### **Administrative Procedures**

1. If the facility chooses to close for any reason related to the current pandemic, notification shall be made in writing to the Child Care Licensing Unit stating dates of the closure.
2. The facility shall notify the Child Care Licensing Unit prior to reopening.

### **Group Size**

1. The group size shall be limited to 10 people, including staff and children. This applies to preschool age and school age children as younger children are already in smaller group sizes per minimum licensing regulations.
2. To the extent possible, children should remain in the same assigned group each day to reduce the likelihood of potential exposure.

### **General Health Requirements**

1. Pick up and drop off shall take place outside of the facility when possible, to reduce the number of individuals entering the facility.
2. Facilities shall prohibit individuals from entering the facility with the exception of the following:
  - a. Facility Staff including transportation staff
  - b. Persons with the legal authority to enter including law enforcement, child care licensing staff, and DHS protective services staff
  - c. Professionals providing services to children, including therapists
  - d. Children enrolled at the facility
  - e. Parents and legal guardians who have children enrolled and present at the facility
  - f. Other professionals who are there for services that cannot be done after hours, for example a plumber, if there is an emergency situation that needs immediate attention



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3. Before allowing entry, the individuals listed above shall be screened. Do not allow anyone to enter the facility if they meet any of the following criteria:
  - a. A temperature of 100.4°F or above
  - b. Have had a temperature of 100.4°F or above in the last 48 hours
  - c. Signs or symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell)
  - d. In the previous 14 days has had contact with someone who has a confirmed diagnosis of the current pandemic
4. Staff shall wear face masks to reduce the risk of potential spread from people who may be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic including transportation staff. Masks may be made of cloth. Cloth masks shall be laundered daily.
5. Children shall be served individual snacks and meals. Family style meals shall not be served.
6. Sick children shall not be cared for at the facility. If a child becomes sick while at the facility, the parents shall immediately be contacted to pick the child up. The child shall be separated, with appropriate supervision, until the parents arrive to pick the child up. Please follow Section 1100 regarding health and hand washing in the Minimum Licensing Requirements.
7. The facility shall follow all specific directives given by the Arkansas Department of Health and/or Department of Human Services related to the current pandemic.

## TRANSPORTATION

**Screening of staff must occur prior to transporting children-see above screening requirements.**

1. All vehicles used for transporting children during the current pandemic must be sanitized prior to transporting children and sanitized between each transportation time.
2. The capacity will be half of the normal capacity for vehicle to allow for social distancing. Place a vacant seat between children, sanitizing between helping each child.
3. Social distancing must be practiced allowing for the maximum amount of space possible between the children.
4. Each child's temperature must be taken at pick up, prior to boarding the vehicle.